

# Promoting Health Equity

Issue 25 • June 2022



**Awareness Month Celebrations**

**JUNETEENTH**  
 CELEBRATION OF  
 VENTURA COUNTY  
 JVCV  
 juneteenthoxnard.org

**JUNETEENTH**  
 Freedom Day Celebration  
**PLAZA PARK**  
 Downtown, 500 S. C St., Oxnard  
**JUNE 18th, 2022 · 10a-5p**

Free To the Public

Local Artists Entertainment Exhibits

Food Vendors Health and Wellness Info

For more information, visit:  
[JuneteenthOxnard.org](http://JuneteenthOxnard.org)

CITY OF OXNARD  
 CALIFORNIA

### Juneteenth

The Juneteenth Celebration, presented by the Juneteenth Committee of Ventura County (JVCV), is taking place on Saturday, June 18 at Plaza Park. This holiday commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the US. The holiday was first celebrated in Texas, where on that date in 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War, slaves were declared free under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation.

Learn more:

[www.juneteenthoxnard.org](http://www.juneteenthoxnard.org)



*"During Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex*

*(LGBTQ+) Pride Month, we reflect on the progress we have made as a Nation in the fight for justice, inclusion, and equality while reaffirming our commitment to do more to support LGBTQ+ rights at home and abroad. I often say that America can be defined by one word: possibilities. This month, we celebrate generations of LGBTQ+ people who have fought to make the possibilities of our Nation real for every American.*

*This month, we honor the resilience of LGBTQ+ people, who are fighting to live authentically and freely. We reaffirm our belief that LGBTQ+ rights are human rights. And we recommit to delivering protections, safety, and equality to LGBTQ+ families so that everyone can realize the full promise of America."*  
—JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

[A Proclamation on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, And Intersex Pride Month, 2022](#), The White House

**Learn more:**

[The Trevor Project](#)

[Active Minds](#)

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### **June is PTSD Awareness Month**

Help us spread the word that effective PTSD treatments are available. Everyone with PTSD—whether they are Veterans or civilian survivors of sexual assault, serious accidents, natural disasters, or other traumatic events—needs to know that treatments really do work and can lead to a better quality of life. During PTSD Awareness Month, and throughout the entire year, help raise awareness about the many different PTSD treatment options.

**Learn more:**

[National Center for PTSD](#)

[Wellness Everyday](#)

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**Driver of Change: Interview with  
Hilda Gomez, District Parent Liaison,  
Oxnard Union High School District**



*Every issue we feature stories of individuals and agencies that are making a difference in their communities. Today we are talking with Hilda Gomez, District Parent Liaison, Oxnard Union High School District.*

**How did you get interested in your work at the Oxnard Union High School District?**

**Hilda:** I have always enjoyed working with people. I obtained my Bachelor's in Sociology and got my first job after college working for Public Health as a Social Worker working with teen moms for a few years. I then decided to pursue a Master's in Education in School Counseling. I began working as a family outreach specialist for Ventura Unified at a family center at one of their local elementary schools and then realized I really enjoyed working with our local families and helping them advocate for their children.

A new position opened up for Oxnard Union High School District as the District Parent Liaison and I decided to apply. I remember how nervous and excited I was when I interviewed. The possibility of working in my community with our local families and students and being able to do what naturally comes to me, helping people. Fourteen years later and I am still in the same position, loving what I do.

**What is your passion for working in the community?**

**Hilda:** In my position I am able to help our families navigate what can sometimes be a complicated system. In our city, elementary and high schools are two different school districts, two systems. For some families, this can be frustrating and discouraging. Even more so for some of our families with socioeconomic and language barriers. We are able to provide

valuable information to families and students on different topics such as navigating the educational system, college and career, parenting tools and basic computer and technology workshops. All are offered in English and Spanish.

### **How are you specifically addressing issues of Health Equity in your work and your community? How are you making a difference?**

**Hilda:** I am very fortunate to be working for a school district that offers a system of support to help promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our superintendent and administration team believe that each student should know their true capacity and believe in their gifts and abilities. We have available on our district website an online resource library available to our families to find resources that can be filtered by topic and grade level (K - 12).

Our district believes in creating enriching environments where schools must create a culture of collaboration, listen attentively to students and families, and understand the experience, knowledge, and culture students bring with them to school. I feel very fortunate to be working for a school district that shares these values.

### **What are the areas that you hope to make changes in?**

**Hilda:** I hope that we can expand our services and be able to reach out to more families utilizing our different communication platforms. I want to be able to build stronger community partnerships to be able to share more information and resources to all our families district-wide. Another goal is to build strong leadership roles within our own district parents to assist in connecting to more parents.

### **Tell us one thing about you that helps us get to know you better?**

**Hilda:** I come from a family of migrant workers who worked in our local strawberry fields. Our family lived through the struggle of living paycheck to paycheck, sometimes having to work two jobs and having to leave us unattended at times to have to make ends meet. We had to move from different locations, usually garage units or studio apartments, struggling to find affordable housing.

Despite having struggled economically growing up, what I do remember is my family teaching us at a young age to have a strong work ethic and a sense of pride in whatever you do no matter where you come from. My parents didn't have an academic background and didn't understand how the education system worked, but one thing they did know was that having an education was a must if you wanted to succeed.

I will always remember my parents providing me with what little financial support they could provide even if was just enough to pay for a schoolbook or supplies. It was through those actions and emotional encouragement that I learned to value my education and not take it for granted. I wasn't academically prepared to

start college right after high school, but I learned through hard work and dedication that I could accomplish whatever goals I set my mind to. I feel that due to my struggles and sacrifices in pursuing my educational goals, it made me value my educational accomplishments even more. Being the first in my family to graduate college, I feel I am a representation of my family and culture, which I am very proud of.

It was then that I knew I had to help people just like my family, just like me. Sometimes we just need a little support and encouragement to make a difference in a world filled with so many obstacles. I hope I can continue to help others by providing the encouragement and support our families need.

**If you could give a closing remark for or words of inspiration for the community during this time, what would it be?**

**Hilda:** In a time of uncertainty, we need to work together in partnership stronger than ever before. Do things we have never done before and do things that might even feel uncomfortable at times, including learning new ways of doing things. If this pandemic has taught me anything it is that being in uncomfortable situations at times can also bring growth. We must be open to different perspectives and be open to learning something new. Change is hard but it's a great feeling when you are able to accomplish something you never thought you could and it empowers you to continue to grow.

*Thank you, Hilda, for sharing your experience with us. You are an inspiring Driver of Change!*

**Learn more:**

[Oxnard Union High School District](#)



**Spotlight: Just Not Worth It  
Prevention Campaign**



The newly launched “Just Not Worth It” prevention campaign is targeted toward teens and young adults who may be at risk for trying and continuing to use drugs illegally. This encompasses both illicit drugs (like heroin and meth) legal drugs taken illegally—typically cannabis and prescription medications.

The goal of the campaign is to educate teens and young adults on the risks to their health, well-being, life-opportunities, and relationships. However, as a critically important component of any campaign targeting young adults, the mood and method of the messaging is purposefully constructed to avoid triggering the reflexive opposition so common to young adults. Instead, the campaign’s messaging allows them a way to choose a different path without losing face.

Instead of blame, the campaign addresses the issue from the perspective of friends that love and miss the person that is currently using. By showing only love and despondence on their friends' part, there is no negative accusation to push back against.

As a secondary goal, the campaign serves as a discussion platform

for adults to discuss illegal drug use with young adults in their care.

**View the websites and videos:**

[English](#)

[Spanish](#)

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## Partner Resources

White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans, U.S. Department of Education

The Initiative works to strengthen the nation by improving educational outcomes for Black Americans of all ages, and to help ensure that all African Americans receive an education that properly prepares them for college, productive careers, and satisfying lives.

**Learn more:**

[sites.ed.gov/whblackeducation](https://sites.ed.gov/whblackeducation)

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### More Cities Are Banning Smoking in Apartment Units

Two more cities have prohibited smoking inside apartment units. On April 26, 2022, Riverside, Calif., city leaders preliminarily approved a ban on smoking in multifamily-housing rental complexes, including individual apartment homes and attached balconies and patios. Latino tenants helped drive the measure. On May 10, 2022, Vallejo, Calif., city leaders banned smoking in multi-unit residences.

Nationally, one quarter of U.S. residents—approximately 79 million people—live in multifamily properties, such as apartments and condos. Most are nonsmokers. But about half are exposed to secondhand smoke.

*“Based on several studies, an estimated 44 percent to 53 percent of multi-unit housing residents that do not allow smoking in their home, have experienced secondhand smoke infiltration in their home from elsewhere in or around the building,” according to the American Lung Association.*

Smoke-free policies are the only way to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke in multifamily units, according to HUD.

Learn more:  
[Salud America!](#)

See our Prevention Campaign: Secondhand Vaping: It Sticks Around



## Upcoming Events

**Racial Disparities In Substance Use Prevention**  
June 15, 10:00 AM  
Central East PTTC  
[Register](#)



## Stay Connected

If you are looking for resources in the community, check out our websites. We continually add news, tips, latest research, blogs, publications and more.

**Social Determinants of Health**  
[www.healthequityvc.org](http://www.healthequityvc.org)

**Ventura County Limits**



## Nominate a Driver of Change

To nominate a community member or colleague for recognition for exemplary work in the community please use the button below. You may also nominate yourself! We would love to hear your stories of community change, what inspired you, and how you are making a difference.



### Learn more:

Social Determinants of Health, Drivers of Change  
[www.healthequityvc.org/drivers-of-change](http://www.healthequityvc.org/drivers-of-change)

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## About Us

### Supporting Health - Preventing Harm

Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention, works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement and community-based organizations.

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## Contact Us

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STAY CONNECTED

